



Branching Out

Creating Connections to End Sexual Violence

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I Ask: SAAM 2019

By Samantha Sustachek



We are in the midst of another Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), and this year's theme, as designated by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) is "I Ask." The campaign is all about the power of asking for consent, not just with sexual partners, but in everyday interactions as well. According to Susan Sullivan, Prevention Campaign Specialist at NSVRC, SAAM is about more than awareness, and its ultimate goal is truly prevention of sexual violence. Understanding that consent is one very clear, concrete way to help prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault is essential, so this year's SAAM campaign is focused on empowering all individuals to put consent into practice in their lives.

Despite the fact that most people have a general understanding of consent and could come up with a definition of the word if asked, many do not fully understand how to practice consent in their everyday lives or teach their children about consent. The concept of digital consent is also becoming more and more important as we move many aspects of our lives, sometimes including intimate moments, online. NSVRC has put together a number of resources to help individuals understand, teach, and model consent more deeply and effectively. These include topics like teaching consent early, asking for digital consent, and how imbalances of power impact consent. These fact sheets and more can be found at: <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam>.

As for Sexual Assault Services (SAS), we are taking most of our SAAM campaign online in 2019. For each day in April, we are posting one or more videos, articles, informational links, and resources pertaining to sexual assault awareness and prevention. Many of these posts are about practicing consent and teaching consent. We hope that, if you are not following us already, you will come find us on Facebook ([SAS of Racine County](#)) and Twitter ([@SASofRacine](#)). You can help communicate the importance of "I Ask" to your personal and professional networks by sharing our posts and using the hashtags #IAsk and #SAAM.

You can also join us in recognizing the 20th annual Denim Day on April 24, 2019. Denim Day began after a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans she must have helped the person who raped her remove her jeans, thereby implying consent. The following day, the women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans in solidarity with the victim. Each year, SAS staff join advocates and supporters across the country in wearing our jeans to show support for survivors everywhere and spread the message that what a victim is wearing is never an excuse for sexual assault. If you are also following us on social media, watch for our Denim Day posts and post your pictures of your own denim on our pages.

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Legislative Update

By Vicki Biehn

In this edition of Branching Out, the Legislative Update article will update the reader on the past Wisconsin legislative session and some of the laws that are related to sexual assault survivors.

Five such laws were passed and signed by Governor Walker.

1. Aiding and Abetting Sexual Abuse by School Personnel (Act 30).

This law enables the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to revoke the license of an individual who helps a school employee, contractor, or agent obtain a new job if the licensee knows or has reason to believe that the employee/contractor has sexually abused a minor or a student. This law also prohibits a school board, governing body of a private school, and an operator of a charter school from providing similar assistance.

2. Soliciting an intimate representation from a minor (Act 129).

This law creates a new crime that generally prohibits soliciting an intimate or private representation from a person who the actor believes or has reason to believe has not attained the age of 18 years. This is a Class I felony. Exception: The new crime does not apply if the person who solicits the representation is under the age of 18. If the person is 18 but not yet 21 and there is not more than three years difference between them, it is a Class A misdemeanor.

3. Underage sexual activity and providing a criminal penalty (Act 174).

This law creates a new crime providing that whoever has sexual contact or intercourse with a child who has attained the age of 15 years but has not attained the age of 16 is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor if the actor has not attained the age of 19 years when this violation occurs. Also, this act modifies the existing crime of sexual intercourse with a child age 16 or older to only apply when the defendant has attained the age of 19 years when the violation occurs.

4. Increased Penalties for Sex Trafficking (Act 131).

This law increases the penalty for patronizing a prostitute from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class I felony if the person has two prior convictions of that crime.

5. Patronizing a Child (Prostitution) (Act 128)

This law increases the penalty for patronizing a prostitute to a Class G felony (previously a class A misdemeanor) if the actor patronized a person who is a minor. The act provides that the

prosecution does not need to prove that the actor knew the age of the child and it is not a defense to the crime that the actor believed the person was at least 18.

In addition, I would like to highlight four bills that were introduced in the last session but did not pass or become law. Two of these bills have already been introduced into the next session and hopefully will be passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor.

1. Statute of Limitations for 2nd Degree Sexual Assault

Provides the prosecution of second degree sexual assault can be initiated at any time. The current statute of limitations for second degree sexual assault is 10 years. Basically, this law would eliminate the statute of limitations for second degree sexual assault.

2. Obtaining a crime victim's mental health treatment records.

This bill creates a procedure by which a defendant in a criminal case may seek access to the mental health record of a crime victim that is not in the possession of or under the control of a government entity when he or she believes that those records contain information that is crucial to the defendant's defense. This bill has already been introduced for this session.

3. Ending Prosecution of Sex-Trafficked Children.

Prohibits prosecution for prostitution if the person was a minor when the act was committed. Currently in Wisconsin, a person can be charged with a Class A misdemeanor of committing an act of prostitution, even if the individual is less than 18 years of age. This bill will eliminate this charge in order to protect children who are being prostituted or trafficked. This bill has already been introduced for this session.

4. Child Sexual Abuse Education.

This bill requires the state Department of Public Instruction to develop a child sexual abuse prevention policy and instructional program for grades K-6, with age-appropriate curriculum providing knowledge and tools for children to escape from a sexual abuse situation and to communicate incidents of sexual abuse. Requires school boards to adopt and administer the department's program or its own policy or program.

This article was adapted from material from the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) and is a general update. If you would like more detailed information on this legislation or on the legislative process, please contact Vicki Biehn at (262) 619-1634 or vbiehn@focusracine.org or Ian Henderson from the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault at (608) 257-1516 or ianh@wcasa.org.

—Vicki





Helping Hands

By Annabell Bustillos

As Sexual Assault Services' Volunteer and Community Awareness Specialist, part of my role is to recruit and help train volunteers to answer the crisis line and respond to the hospital. When I talk to potential volunteers about the work I do as a sexual assault advocate, they sometimes wonder how I know what to say or do. I share with them that, although it may seem scary at first, it really isn't. There are just a few important things to remember when talking to survivors.

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) has a very helpful article with tips for talking with survivors of sexual assault. Using this article as a guideline, I would like to share some helpful tips on how to handle disclosures from survivors of sexual assault.

The first, and what I believe to be the most important thing, is to believe. It costs nothing and can have a priceless potential healing benefit to a survivor, whereas not being believed can cause profound damage to a survivor. Yes, it is true that there are sometimes false accusations, but in reality, according to many studies, false reports only occur between 2 and 8 percent of the time.

You might also want to consider recognizing a disclosure as an act of strength. It can be really difficult for someone to come forward and share their story, and acknowledging their courage can be very helpful.

Another thing to do is to remind survivors that they are not to blame. Survivors sometimes blame themselves, especially if they know the perpetrator, and according to RAINN, 8 out of 10 rapes are committed by someone known to the victim. Given these statistics, it is important to remind a survivor that the assault was not their fault.

RAINN has some helpful phrases that their staff recommends using to be supportive through a survivors healing process:

- "I believe you. / It took a lot of courage to tell me about this."
- "It's not your fault. / You didn't do anything to deserve this."
- "You are not alone. / I care about you and am here to listen or help in any way I can."

- "I'm sorry this happened. / This shouldn't have happened to you."

Phrases like these can help a survivor feel heard, believed, supported, and not alone. These phrases may seem simple or like it's not much to offer, but a simple "I believe you" can make a world of difference to someone who has not been believed or who is afraid of coming forward because of the rape jokes and victim blaming s/he may have heard in the past.

Sometimes, I feel that people think that in order to help or support a survivor you need to have all of the answers, but really you don't. You simply need to be there, care, and meet survivors where they are at that moment.

If you, or anyone you know, needs information about sexual assault please contact the office at (262) 619-1634 or our 24-hour crisis line at (262) 637-7233.

To find out more about becoming a volunteer please contact me (Annabell Bustillos) at (262) 619-1634 ext. 14 or via email at abustillos@focusracine.org.

—Annabell

Adapted from <https://www.rainn.org/articles/tips-talking-survivors-sexual-assault>



SAS Program Statistics 2018

Crisis Line Calls.....	119
Racine Hospital Visits.....	77
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	5
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	51
New Counseling Clients.....	36
Counseling Sessions.....	728
Support Group Sessions.....	0
Community Presentations.....	81
CAC Appointments.....	112



Family Advocate

By Christa Dasher

Touch and affection are things that we all need as human beings. This need is no different for children. In fact, according to Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children, "Healthy affection and touch is protective from child sexual abuse, especially with parents, caregivers, and family members." Children who are deprived of touch and affection become "touch-starved" and may seek out affection elsewhere, which makes them prime targets for predators. You may wonder, what are the rules when providing touch and affection to children? Below are some of the guidelines you should follow regarding healthy touch.

1. Healthy touch and affection will often be initiated by children. You should always seek permission before touching children. This helps to teach them about the concept of consent.
2. It is important to teach children that their bodies are their own, and that they have a right to say no to anything that they are uncomfortable with. Allow children to set their own boundaries and make decisions about touch and affection. For example don't force a child to give a relative a hug if s/he doesn't want to.
3. As the adult, be aware of children's nonverbal signals. If their bodies tighten up or they pull away, be sure to stop what you are doing and check in with them and how they are feeling.
4. Teach children about respecting personal space, both their own and others. This may be especially challenging with children who have been sexually abused. They often have not experienced having rules set regarding personal space and boundaries. It is important to show them appropriate ways to express affection by role modeling these behaviors to them. Make sure not to scold or make them feel ashamed for their behavior. To them, this may be all they have ever known.
5. Educate yourself on healthy sexual development in children. Be aware that children are also sexual beings. Know how to differentiate between normal healthy behaviors and those that are potentially of concern.

If you work with children in a youth serving organization, you may wonder how you can provide healthy touch and affection to those children you work with. In addition to following the above guidelines, make your touch observable by others.

Some example of appropriate ways you can provide affection include: shoulder-to-shoulder "side hugs", high-fives, pats on the shoulder, handshakes and positive praise and reinforcement. Remember children need love, warmth, encouragement and a sense of belonging, in order to thrive. When healthy affection and touch are given with warmth, children feel nurtured and affirmed. In addition, children's risk of being a victim of sexual abuse will also decrease.

—Christa

Adapted from Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children training: Healthy Touch for Children and Youth.

Thank You Focus On Community!



For those who don't already know, Sexual Assault Services (SAS) made a significant transition at the end of 2018, and that transition kept us very busy and prevented us from compiling and distributing our Fall 2018 edition of Branching Out. After almost 20 years under the umbrella of Lutheran Social Services (LSS), LSS chose to part ways with both our program and the Stop Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program here in Racine. As neither program is designated as its own nonprofit, both SAS and SCAN needed to quickly find new homes in order to be able to continue receiving our grant funding and providing services to the community. We found that home in Focus On Community. SAS and SCAN are so grateful to Jason Meekma and Focus for being willing to take us on, at least through 2019 and maybe beyond. Transitions are never easy, and we appreciate Focus for figuring things out with us as we go. SAS would never be able to do the work that we do without our community partnerships, and this partnership with Focus illustrates that perfectly. Thank you to Focus and to everyone who makes our work with survivors in Racine possible.

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One SAAM activity that will not be happening in April this year is SAS's annual Seeds of Change luncheon. Due to the extra work involved with our program transition (see page x), we felt that we would not be able to get the event organized and do it justice by April. We are pleased to announce, however, that the luncheon and awards ceremony will still occur and will simply be pushed back a few months. Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us on Tuesday, June 11, 2019 for our 5th annual Seeds of Change luncheon.

Thank you, as always, for supporting SAS and sexual assault survivors in Racine County. Have a great April!

—Sam



Face to Face

By Kari Wilder

Most Americans consider human trafficking a foreign issue. It's something that happens in foreign lands and its victims are citizens of different countries. Most Americans don't think about U.S. citizens, both adults and children, being sold for sex against their will in places like Iowa, Montana, or Wisconsin. The reality is that human trafficking occurs in all 50 states. The illegal sex industry is a thriving business in all parts of the country. So what happens to these victims when they fight back against their offenders? What happens when they use violence to survive? The reality is that in many cases, especially when the victims are people of color, our criminal justice system does not view them as victims at all.

In 2004, 16-year-old Cyntoia Brown killed 43-year-old Johnny Allen in Nashville, Tennessee. He was found nude in his bed. She was arrested the next day and was found in possession of his white pick up truck, his wallet, and some of his guns, one of which was the murder weapon. When she was interviewed by the police Brown waived her Miranda Rights and confessed to police that she was the one who killed him but that she had killed him in self-defense. She stated that after he agreed to pay \$150 to have sex with her, he drove her to his home where he became violent and threatened her with his numerous weapons. She informed police that she feared for her life. She also told the police that at the time she was living with a man she called "Cut Throat." "Cut Throat" was a 24-year-old man who was sexually, physically, and emotionally abusive to Brown and who had forced her into prostitution. Despite evidence that 16-year-old Brown, who also had fetal alcohol syndrome, was trafficked by 24-year-old predator "Cut Throat" and then assaulted by 43-year-old predator Allen, the adults investigating the case decided that her real motive was simply robbery and sentenced her to two consecutive life sentences.

In 2018, 17-year-old Chrystul Kizer killed 34-year-old Randall P. Volar III in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He was found shot and killed in his home which was then set on fire. Kizer was charged with arson, first degree murder, and for being a felon in possession of a firearm. Kizer bragged on social media about killing Volar. She even snapped a selfie in Volar's home, and as a result the crime made headlines. It wasn't until months later that the dialog about the crime changed when her public defender introduced the fact that Volar was under active investigation for sexual conduct with other underage girls. The police suspected that Volar was making child pornography, and his bank account had actually been flagged by the police because they

suspected he was involved in human trafficking. Kizer's boyfriend told police that he had given Kizer a gun because Volar kept "touching on her." Kizer's lawyer believes all this information provides evidence that Kizer and many other children were victims of ongoing sexual abuse and that Kizer killed Volar in self-defense.

Hollywood is full of movies of people who fight back against their abusers just like Brown and Kizer did, and they are applauded for their efforts. We often feel a sense of justice when we watch individuals finally attack the man or woman who has tortured and abused them. In the movie *Enough* we watched Jennifer Lopez's character take self-defense to learn how to kill her attacker. In *Taken* we watch Liam Neeson chase down and kill the men who attempted to traffick his daughter. The movie was so popular Hollywood made *Taken 2* and *Taken 3*. In the real world these victims aren't treated as victims or seen as heroes and instead are seen as criminals and locked away for the remainder of their lives for attempting to survive. Their trauma is completely ignored.

This is so common that it led to the creation of Survived & Punished (S&P). S&P is a national coalition made up of advocates, lawyers, various experts in policy and/or trauma, and individuals who were previously incarcerated or who are currently incarcerated. S&P's goal is to de-criminalize the efforts of individuals to survive sexual or domestic violence and to support individuals who are currently incarcerated. You can do your part to help get justice for these survivors and support programs like S&P by supporting their social media campaigns. In 2019 social media is one of the most powerful tools that we have to fight injustice. The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA), along with other agencies in Milwaukee, is advocating for the release of Chrystul Kizer with #FreeChrystul. There has also been a gofundme.com account set to help Kizer and her family. Thanks to social media campaigns Cyntoia Brown's case was brought to the attention of various celebrities including Kim Kardashian and Rihanna. In January of this year, Cyntoia Brown was finally granted clemency by the governor of Tennessee. She will be released in August of 2019.

—Kari





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Contact Us!

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Burlington, WI 53105
262-763-6226 Ext. 109

24 Hour Crisis Line: 262-637-SAFE (7233)
Spanish Crisis Line: 262-424-3134
Website: <http://www.sasofracine.org>

Stay Connected!



Join our News and Events email update list! Would you like to receive information on upcoming SAS events and volunteer opportunities? Email Samantha Sustachek at ssustachek@focusracine.org with "SAS news and events" in the subject line and she will include you in all SAS news and events related emails.

Sexual Assault Services seeks to create a safe and compassionate environment to help promote the healing of sexual assault survivors and their support people.

Sexual Assault Services is funded by United Way of Racine County, Victims of Crime Act grant, Sexual Assault Victim Services grant, the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative grant, the Racine Dominican Mission Fund, and the support of generous local donors.

